



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Glacier Bay National Park
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Glacier Bay News Release

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Dead Killer Whale Found in Glacier Bay

A dead female killer whale was discovered on the northwest shore of Young Island in Glacier Bay National Park on Friday, August 26, 2005. The killer whale, also known by its scientific name, *Orcinus orca*, was a juvenile, measuring 11 ft. 8 inches in length and weighing an estimated 600 – 1000 lbs. The animal's age and the cause of death are unknown. However, remnants of fishing gear were discovered attached to the inside of the mouth of the toothed whale. There were no obvious signs of external injuries to the whale.

Over the weekend, marine mammal veterinarians, working in conjunction with biologists from the National Park Service, NOAA Fisheries, and the University of Alaska, Southeast, performed a necropsy on the animal in order to determine the cause of its death. Dr. Pam Tuomi, Senior Veterinarian at the Alaska SeaLife Center in Seward, Alaska, headed up the necropsy. Findings from this report are expected in approximately two weeks.

Killer whales frequent Glacier Bay and the Inside Passage in pods, which are social groups numbering from 3 to 40 animals. A pod of approximately 30 animals had been observed in lower Glacier Bay and Icy Strait prior to August 26. Resident populations of killer whales generally feed on fish, while transient populations primarily eat marine mammals. Both residents and transients are known to come into Glacier Bay. Killer Whales may live to 50 or more years of age.

Any person with information related to the death of this killer whale is requested to contact the National Park Service (907-697-2627) or NOAA Fisheries (907-586-7225).

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